

Former State Worker Sentenced to Prison For Theft From Aid Program

DOJ prosecutors also secure convictions and sentencings for traffic fatality, drugs, burglary, robbery

A 62-year-old Felton woman will spend two years in prison for her role in the theft of federal funds from an aid program providing money for food benefits. Joellen Edwards pled guilty to Theft over \$100,000 and Official Misconduct. Edwards was one of seven former employees of the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) responsible for issuing Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards arrested and indicted earlier this year. An investigation revealed that the fraudulent EBT cards were delivered to State Service Centers in New Castle and Kent County, and intercepted by the suspects working at those locations. Once intercepted, the cards were personally used or sold at a discount. Deputy Attorneys General Dennis Kelleher, Matthew Frawley, and Phillip Casale secured the plea, and Edwards was sentenced by Judge Eric Davis to two years in prison, followed by one year of supervised probation. Edwards will then remain on unsupervised probation until she pays restitution of \$378,880 to DHSS.

Deputy Attorney General Kathleen Dickerson secured a guilty plea from Michael August, 56, of Smyrna to Operation of a Motor Vehicle Causing Death, relating to a fatal crash in September 2015. August ran a stop sign at the intersection of Kenton Road and Central Church Road north of Dover, and collided with a motorcycle driven by 62-year-old David Hemphill of Smyrna, who died as a result of the collision. August is scheduled to be sentenced by Judge William Witham Jr. in November.

Deputy Attorney General Caroline Brittingham secured a prison sentence for Eric Amaro, 45, of Georgetown to two counts of Drug Dealing. In February 2015, Amaro sold heroin to an undercover officer on two occasions, just 48 days after being released from jail on a Drug Dealing offense. Judge Henley Graves declared Amaro a habitual offender on one of the two counts, and sentenced him to a total of eight years in prison, including completion of the Greentree program, followed by the completion of the Crest program in a residential substance abuse treatment center, followed by 18 months of Crest aftercare.

Deputy Attorney General Gregory Babowal secured a guilty plea from 29-year-old Robert Crawley of Greenwood. During the summer of 2015, Crawley broke into several homes in Milford, Harrington, and Ellendale, stealing numerous items including a shotgun, laptop computer, televisions, and jewelry. Crawley pled guilty to three counts of Burglary Second Degree, one count of Disregarding a Police Officer Signal, and one count of Conspiracy Second Degree. Judge William Witham Jr. sentenced Crawley to a total of 7 years in prison followed by probation.

Deputy Attorney General Christina Kontis secured a prison sentence for William Bacon, 21, of Wilmington. In October 2015, Bacon arranged to meet someone in order to purchase a cell phone. When the victim met Bacon for the sale, he took the phone at gunpoint, and she was struck in the face, causing a laceration to her mouth. Following a jury trial for convictions of Robbery First Degree and Assault Third Degree, Judge Diane Clarke Streett sentenced Bacon to a total of 6 years in prison, including one year for a probation violation. Bacon's prison sentence will be followed by six months of either work release or home confinement, followed by two years of probation.